1: Child1 p1-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13



863 ocisamo defecates on the bed he will be slapped that he may not repeat, but less flagrant breaches do not seem to call for punishment.

868 *Language*. The progress of toddlers in language mastery is rapid. Some mispronunciations are allowed. Some children pronounce correctly more rapidly than do others. Correct use of the language including mastery of the complicated grammatical structure, however, is mastered much earlier than is the case with English-speaking children. One could almost say as does Father Van Wing of the Kongo child: 'À quatre ans il parle mieux sa belle langue Kikongo, qu'un Européen de douze ans ne parle la sienne.'[1] The baby's earliest babblings, as well as his later evident imitations of his elders, are all recognized as his attempts at self-expression which as a matter of course will straighten themselves out in due time.[2] Parents speak to their children in a tone distinctly different from that employed in ordinary adult conversation, but they rarely if ever use the baby's own mispronunciations or 'baby-talk' as do Europeans and Americans. This, and the fact that young children have much more practice than have our children, owing to the constant companionship of their elders, seems to be the secret of their rapid progress. Whether the nature of the language itself has any effect would be an interesting subject for investigation.

967 *Manners* are also taken on quickly during this time. Toddlers are not expected to practise any very wide range of the social niceties, but what they do, they do correctly. They give and receive with both hands. They both give and answer greetings with proper terms of respect. An outsider, however, can rarely observe such behaviour naturally in the young child. He has been so

606 514 of the *American Folk-Lore Society*, vol. xxxv, pp. 129 ff.) The terms used are as follows:

| *Exact terms* | *Euphemisms* |
|---|---|
| To urinate, *oku sêsê* (urine, *ovalê*) | *oku tolomilîka*, lit. 'to stand to something'. *oku lîtapela*, lit. 'to water oneself' (said of a child when it wets itself or its bed). |
| To defecate, *oku nia* (feces, *ovinha*) | *oku enda kuovenge*, lit. 'to go to the bush'. *oku enda kufuka*, lit. 'to go to the country'. |

The verb *oku nia* is used as a strong or profane expletive or interjectory phrase, especially in the first person with *etuli* (to-day), as *Etuli ndia nia*. The verb is euphemistically left off.

*Etudes Bakongo*, p. 162.

Cf. the proverb: *Wa sema, wa imba: wa tumbuka, wa papia*, 'He misquotes, he sings: he babbles, he speaks.'

1: Childs M-S (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13



thoroughly drilled in fear of the stranger that he can rarely act naturally in the presence of one.

*Physical development.* From the time that the child is weaned his physical development proceeds more slowly on the whole than is the case with the children of European peoples. This slow development continues to be noticeable through childhood and adolescence. In early childhood there also seems to take place an increase in the rate of mortality. These facts may be due, at least in part, to specific deficiencies of diet. As has been noted, the customary diet of the Ovimbundu is lacking in fats, in calcium, and in certain vitamins, elements which are very necessary for the growing child, and which, before weaning, the mother's milk had supplied. The difference in physical well-being as between babies and children after weaning is marked among the Ovimbundu.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13



869 children, even though they may not have seen them themselves. Sometimes at night when it is desired to send a child saying, Go and fetch such-and-such a thing (*ongandi*), then he will begin to tremble, for since it is as black as sin . . . he thinks to himself saying, Everything is full of ghosts, maybe they'll catch me if I go outside. . . . The male parent does not like to teach the children such great fear of ghosts, and he may say, He has great fear of ghosts, and that is a sorcerer which also kills people. There, there, my child, go and get what they've sent you for; fear is not good, go on, my child.'

There is a good deal of realism in ascribing most of the teaching of fear to the 'side of the basket', but it should be remembered, however, that the narrative was composed by men. Fear is also instilled through folk-tales telling of punishments inflicted by the spirits and by various mythical monsters. The fact of their being told at night also adds to their effectiveness.

867 2. *Social Usage.* 'Children are generally ignorant until they have been taught by their relatives with whom they live. First the parents, or an elder sibling, may ask the child saying, Who is this? He answers, Mother (*Mai*) or Father (*Tate*) (as the case may be). If the child is the first-born, his cross-cousins (*apalume*) may try him out, saying, Revile your Mother, and (if) he reviles her, they will remember that he has no fear of his mother or his father and they will say, *Avoyo*,[1] the child has no sense (*olondunge*) yet.

'When the child has grown a little so that he appears as one who should distinguish those who are worthy of respect, they try him again, saying, Revile[2] your elder sibling (*hatwove*), and he reviles him; Revile your mother (*nyõkõ*), and he does, Revile your father (*so*), but he refuses. Then they recognize that the child now has sense (*olondunge*) and so they switch him with switches. From that time the child ceases (to revile) and begins to respect all people. He does not again err in thinking that only Father is worthy of respect, but rather all people whoever they may be.[3] Children are verbally

[1] *Avoyo*, an expletive expressive of surprise, disgust, &c., according to context and tone used.

[2] *Tuka*, to revile, to speak evil. The child may say, so-and-so is bad (*kuka*), or so-and-so stinks (*lika*), or so-and-so is 'crazy' (*tepa*), or he may simply say I revile him (*Nda tuka*). *Tuka* comes from the same root as *tukula*, to call by name.

[3] i.e. those older than the child. Only those of one's age set or older may merit respect.

warned against that which is taboo (*eci ci kola*)—anger, theft, and doing evil to people. Should a child hear bad words from children with whom he stays when his parents go to the fields, he will imitate them and if elders hear him they will report. When parents go off to the fields they warn their child saying, When you stay here in the village, do not wound your playmate or put out his eye, lest it bring trouble (*ocimbu*, lit. 'fines') on your family. Or again, As to stealing eggs or snatching from the pot cooking on the fire, don't do it. Should your playmate say, Let's go and steal such-and-such a thing, you run away; and don't greet a person you don't know lest you may find trouble (*ocimbu*). Then the child will remain with that fear.

'From his infancy a child is bashful about coming in where elders are, but a little later he likes to be among them to hear what they are saying and to become accustomed to the points of their talk. In order to catch them (the points), he is quiet. He notices how they greet people, whether in the morning or during the day, or again how they greet guests coming from afar; for there are great differences between the various greetings. Even a small child may be taught to greet people until he is accustomed to it and remembers that people are to be greeted. But if a child grows up without learning to greet people (i.e. properly), they will say of him, His parents taught him badly, the child is a fool for when he meets people he does not greet them, not even guests. His parents will hear it said that their child has not been taught, that he is an indecent fellow, and that even among those who make shame, he does even that which ties up with shame. Among people he speaks standing up instead of bowing over or kneeling and snapping his fingers (i.e. for permission to speak).

'His parents must teach him to direct his glance properly that his eyes remain properly in his head.[1] Likewise his mouth, if while he is speaking he should twist it to one side, then if his parents or his grandmother should see it, they will warn him saying, Your mouth, you must not twist it to the side while you speak, lest people should think, He ridicules (us). The child is taught that while speaking with a person he must neither eat, nor

[1] I.e. he must not look his interlocutor in the eye. It is proper to remain with downcast look or to look away at something else. Europeans not understanding this demeanour take it to indicate inattention. One of our pupils failed in his official school examination for this reason, in January 1938.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13



867 spit, nor toy with anything in his hand. Should his knees knock together, *puaki puaki*,[1] when he runs, they will warn him (against it), saying, Lest when you are grown you may retain the habit and may not be able to walk properly as everyone walks. When a visitor comes into the hut to visit with his parents, while they talk, the well-taught child does not interrupt but is strictly silent, for it is taboo. Otherwise, it would be said, Their child has been taught as by a widow,[2] interrupting when people converse. But if he is spoken to, he must reply with care and with respect to the person speaking, saying, Yes sir (*nã oco*); Yes, thank you (*ã kuku*, lit. yes, great-grandfather!); Yes indeed, thank you (*oco mutiê a kuku*); Sir Lião (*nã Hoti*); Ah, Sir Lord (*Nã a Nalã*); Ah, Master of the Paws (*nã a Cime-cakasa*).[3]

'Should the elders send him (somewhere), he will obey quickly. He will also imitate the elders in everything. Then they may say of him, This boy *now* begins to have the habits of adults. They may begin to liken him to someone who died a long time ago. Those who have known his family may say, This child completes so-and-so (*Ngandi*), surely he is likely to be the inheritor of so-and-so (*Kapiñalã ka Ngandi*), perhaps it is his great-grandfather.[4]

'These then are the habits which belong to being grown-up and should a person omit them, people's words will have no meaning for him, and he will have lost his chance.'

From the foregoing it will be seen that a child of about eight is supposed to know his social status and all the etiquette which pertains to it. Where the *onjango* (men's club) still functions as an institution, there the boys learn much of the Umbundu way of life, for there they eat daily in company with all the men and boys of the village. Children are supposed to learn 'table-manners' by watching and imitating their elders. In the *onjango* the hierarchy of age is observed, honoured guests and old men being served first, and so on down the line. Guests are provided with individual (574) servings, but it is hardly proper for one to finish up everything. Any one of the boys will count it a privilege to do that for him. The greater the guest, the greater the honour to finish his plate. A guest of special category, as, for example, the king, who is unable

[1] *Puaki, puaki*, imitation of the sound made by knees knocking together.

[2] It is proverbial that a widow (alone) is unable to bring up her child. Cf. the proverb: *Ocimbumba ka ci longi omõlã*. 'A widow does not educate a child.'

[3] The last three are addressed only to a king or a chief; the others to any older person of either sex.

[4] The reference is to reincarnation.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13



to eat in public, will be served by himself in the *etambo* (spirit-hut). With the decline of the *onjango* as an institution, there has been a great decline in the teaching of etiquette and social usage. As might be expected, this has affected boys more directly than girls. Girls and young women of the present generation and of the generation now coming on are, on the whole, more given to customary usage and forms of civility than are boys and young men. It is probable that contacts with Europeans, which have been going on for more than 150 years, have produced a number of individuals and families who have paid less heed to correct usage and have neglected to teach children properly, but never has there been the wholesale disregard which is now encountered. If the analogy of the South African Bantu peoples is any criterion, a reaction back to things Umbundu may soon be expected. Some observers feel that it is already under way.

Little direct sex teaching is attempted, but the very fact of the sex division of society is a considerable factor.

'A mother will teach her daughter saying, A girl does not play with boys, for boys are sharp ones.[1] Don't play with them. This advice is because of sex, although the child may not understand it at the time. But when the boys call her, she will remember the advice of her mother and may quickly reply, saying, My mother says, Don't play with boys: they'll hurt you. Thus she has taken to heart what her mother has told her and may go ahead in the same way. But as she grows up and separates from her parents,[2] then she may separate herself from their teaching.' Young children acquire incidentally a good deal of knowledge about sex both from other children and from adults. Although adults observe considerable reticence in speaking of sexual matters in the presence of children, living as they do with their parents in one-room homes, it is inevitable that sexual intercourse should sometimes be observed by children.[3] Although euphemisms of speech are employed in the presence of children, all the true terms are known by them. Hetero-sexual play is not in vogue.

[1] *Jamilili*, lit. sharpened stakes such as those used at the bottom of a pit-fall to trap game.

[2] i.e. at adolescence, when she leaves her mother to stay with other girls of her age.

[3] Cf. Father Van Wing on the Congo child: 'A six ans . . . il en emporte une connaissance de la vie qui ferait rougir de bons jeunes gens d'Europe' (op. cit., p. 262).

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13



The practice and teaching of modesty seem to have been changing considerably for a long time. The influence of Europeans has doubtless had its effect, but more fundamental, it seems, has been the effect of increasingly generalized use of clothing, a process which began perhaps 200 years ago, but is yet far from complete. The time when boy or girl may begin to wear clothing is determined less by age than by the economic status of his family. There seems to be no shame (on the part of the child) connected with late wearing of clothes, but once a child has begun to wear a cloth, he or she is taught that it is shameful to take it off in the presence of those who are older. That this attitude is not of recent origin is attested by its appearance in a biographical narrative which goes back sixty years or more.[1] A large proportion of the women have only enough cloth for workaday wear for a short skirt, so that they leave the torso bare, but once one becomes accustomed to covering the torso always, she would be ashamed not to. This feeling belongs more to the field of economic status than to that of modesty. This shows up clearly in the strong objection to being ragged (*epële*), which has nothing to do with modesty but rather with economic status. The narrative concludes the teaching of social usage with this observation: 'From the time that children first enter into the school of understanding (*olondunge*), parents recognize that it is proper to respect them, rather than to revile them or tell them that which is evil.'

3. *Training in skills.* Before the age of eight or nine, children acquire few definite skills. Many of their games, however, are in imitation of adult activities, and adults recognize their preparatory nature and value. The little girl in caring for her younger sibling acquires certain skills, but with little or no definite adult guidance. Little boys begin early to make and set traps and snares under the tuition of an elder sibling or cousin. The first rat or bird caught belongs to the tutor. Games of many sorts are played: games with sides, round games, games with an 'It', imaginative games, and competitive games; games demanding skill, especially with dances of some intricacy. Games in imitation of animals are favourites, including 'birdcalls', in which very ingenious words are set to the bird songs.

4. The Ovimbundu have a custom somewhat comparable to what Vedder calls '*child insurance*' among the Herero,[2] i.e., the

[1] From a manuscript by Daniel Kalei of Bailundu.

[2] In Hahn *et al.*, op. cit., p. 177.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13



sending of children to stay with relatives or friends. The Ovimbundu consider it definitely an educational device. From the age of six or seven years children are sent singly or in pairs to spend as much as one or two years in the home of the mother's brother. If conditions are favourable they may also be sent to stay with the father's sister or brother, and girls (other than the first-born) may be sent to the mother's mother. Formerly, prominent families arranged for their sons to stay in the king's capital. These periods spent away from home may continue well into adolescence. Not only relatives but also friends, blood-brothers, and *vakuacisoko* (members of a certain communal order)[1] exchange children for certain periods in this way. This custom is by no means dead. It is now being carried on even within the Christian community. Its educational purpose is obvious.

### *Later Childhood*

*(From about nine years until puberty)*

There is no definite time which marks the transition from early to later childhood, but there are marked differences between the two periods. The chief criterion is one of physical development for as soon as the child is physically able, he will begin to assume a definite role in the work of the adult community. This rarely comes before nine years of age and may be somewhat delayed. Soon after a child gets the permanent teeth, a notch in the form of an inverted V (∧) is chipped between the two upper front incisors.[2] This is a sort of national mark which many people omit to give their children at present. The line of observance is not sharply drawn as between Christians and non-Christians, as with the Herero.[3]

Formerly, the beginning of the period was well marked for the boy by his first trip with a trading caravan. Most of the present older generation have had this experience and nearly every man of the present middle-aged generation as well. Nowadays the boy of this age may begin to work in the fields with his father, he may begin to learn a trade, or he may be sent to school. Few Ovimbundu put their children in school before this age, and they evidently do not believe that younger children would profit by the instruction

[1] See *infra*, p. 114 f.
[2] See Hambly, op. cit., Plates XLIX and LIV.
[3] Vedder in Hahn *et al.*, op. cit., p. 177 f.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13



giving the baby the respectful terms of 'my wife' or 'my husband';[1] also in the comment of the narrator that 'parents recognize that it is proper to respect them (children)'[2] and in parents' reluctance to punish. It seems that this respectful treatment of children stems from belief in reincarnation, whereby a child is potentially an ancestor to be respected, deferred to, and even worshipped.

It is doubtful whether at present many children could be found who have really gone through the ceremonial for becoming media for guardian spirits of the family (*olosande*). The drift away from those observances has become a flood. Nevertheless respectful treatment of children remains, perhaps even undiminished, for it still has the force of customary behaviour if not the supernatural sanction. Indulgence on the part of the parents rarely if ever goes to the length of pampering. Belief that the child's character ultimately, or to a large extent, depends upon spiritual forces may lead parents to adopt a sort of fatalism, but that is hardly more serious than the effects of belief in the influence of heredity popularly held in the West. The Ovimbundu do not believe, as do the Zulus, for example, that a child is tainted at birth, needing radical treatment against the subsequent appearance of the taint.[3] With the Ovimbundu the development of personality is a process which *may* involve spiritual forces, but at all events requires careful human attention.

### *Education and Society*

What then are the means by which the Ovimbundu develop the personalities of their children or mould them to the social norm? Their success indicates that they along with other 'so-called backward races have proved to be educationists . . . of no mean order'.[4] What, then, are their methods?

The educational process is the whole process of life and culture. School is society and society is school; there is no division between adult and child life. Education and life are one. This has been recognized as true for many African and other primitive societies.[5]

[1] *Supra*, p. 89.
[2] *Supra*, p. 104.
[3] See Krige, op. cit., p. 67.
[4] W. D. Hambly, *Origins of Education among Primitive Peoples* (London: Macmillan, 1926), p. 401.
[5] See the interesting analysis of M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, p. 8 f. (Supplement to *Africa*, Oct. 1938); Margaret

1: Childs M-S (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13



This unity of 'the social sphere of adult and child' is a striking feature of the Umbundu educational process. A child learns by actual participation in adult activities. He participates as soon as he is able and in so far as he is able in all phases of adult life. A child begins early to assume responsibility both for himself and for as much regular 'adult activity' as his knowledge and ability may allow him to take on. This being the case, it is to be expected that all factors—physiological, psychological, social, and cultural—are so closely interrelated in the process of Umbundu education that their unity is almost organic.

Given this unitary social sphere, it is easy to understand that children always want to grow up. They are anxious to undertake full responsibility and full participation as early as they may. It has been pointed out that adults do not, or are expected not to, force the pace: they must not set tasks beyond the ability of the children in the actual stage of their development.[1] Normal development and normal behaviour are expected of children as a matter of course.[2] The possibility of aberrant behaviour[3] does not seem regularly to enter parents' minds, much less their utterances, as is too often the case with us. Adult expectation of normal development in children is perhaps best seen in the Umbundu concept of sense or intelligence (*olondunge*), something which every normal person is expected to have in some measure from the time of weaning. It is a relative term when applied to children and the young.[4] Some adults have it in greater measure than others. But every *person* will have it according to the proverb:

*Omuku lovonya, omunu lolondunge.*
A rat with fur, a person with sense.

As every rat has fur, every person has sense.

Learning, as he does, in the real social and cultural situation of Umbundu life, the child develops genetically the behaviour

Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (New York: Morrow, 1928). Some writers have claimed this to be true of all the simpler cultures, e.g. Dewey, op. cit., p. 8 f., but cf. Margaret Mead, *Growing up in New Guinea* (New York: Morrow, 1930). Many of the African initiation rites seem to have been introduced from the outside and hence involve a distinct dichotomy, *vide* Stayt, op. cit.

[1] See *supra*, p. 110.

[2] See Fortes' discussion of a similar attitude among the Tallensi, op. cit., pp. 25–8.

[3] For the fatalistic attitude taken on failure to conform, see *supra*, p. 106.

[4] See *supra*, p. 100.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13



pattern 'singled out in the institutions of his culture'.[1] I agree with Fortes on the Tallensi that 'The total pattern is not built up brick by brick like a house, but evolves'.[2] I am not convinced, however, of the necessity for postulating 'embryonic forms' or *schemas* of the total patterns supposed to be present in the child from the beginning.[3] Whether the *schemas* are supposed to be a part of the child's innate equipment, Fortes does not make clear, but I see no necessity for any such hypothesis. The method by which and the situation in which the Ocimbundu child learns, are ample explanation for the early and thorough development of the pattern of his culture.

Neither is it necessary to postulate either 'faculties' or 'instinctive drives' to explain Umbundu education.[4] Rather this study takes a view of 'human nature . . . as consisting essentially of specific situations'.[5] Instances in support of this view could be cited from the descriptive part of this chapter but that would be outside the scope of this study. The most important fact with regard to Umbundu education is its identification with life: the absence of cleavage as between 'school' and society, as between the social sphere of the child and the adult. The most important educational method in use is actual participation in the social and cultural or 'real life' situation. The educational 'content' is the whole Umbundu culture, consisting of attitudes (psychological and social), social usages, skills, observances, and traditional 'literature'. By far the most important are the social attitudes and usages. I turn therefore to the problems of

### *Social Adjustment*

The education of the Ocimbundu child in the traditional social setting is far more social than is the case with us. The child learns

[1] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1934), p. 254.

[2] M. Fortes, op. cit., p. 42.

[3] Ibid., pp. 42 ff. Fortes attributes the concept of *schemas* to F. C. Bartlett (*Remembering*).

[4] In his discussion of education among the Tallensi, quoted above, Fortes does not specifically mention either of these hypotheses and he rightly remarks that some writers have 'attributed an almost mystical significance to imitation' as the principal method by which a child learns. He then proceeds, however, to classify the learning processes under *Mimesis*, *Identification*, *Co-operation*, and *Play*. Except for the first, these activities are of much importance in Umbundu education.

[5] Hugh Hartshorne, *Character in Human Relations*, p. 195 (New York: Scribner's, 1932); see also Allport, op. cit., p. 81.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13



867 the correct adjustments early, naturally grows into a comparatively well-adjusted life, and so avoids the major conflicts to a much greater degree than is the case in our society. A very large proportion of those in conflict in present-day Umbundu society are de-tribalized or partially de-tribalized individuals, especially those who as children were brought up outside or largely outside the kinship groups. The large proportion of those brought up on the mission stations who are out of adjustment, and often in overt conflict, has been noticed by many observers. The biographies and autobiographies which I have collected witness clearly to the same fact, that most of the ill-adjusted individuals and those in overt conflict were products of an extra-tribal, de-tribalized, or non-traditional situation; while practically all of the well-adjusted persons were educated within the kinship system.

154 The three major conflicts which have been recognized in our 865 society, that is, 'struggle', sex, and 'inferiority',[1] are all present in some form among the Ovimbundu. The adjustments by which they resolve these conflicts are distinctive.

Adjustments in anger by which the 'struggle conflict' is resolved are interesting and important educationally. The child is taught when quite young that the expression of anger is taboo.[2] Tantrums are rare among Ovimbundu children. Anger and ill-will are named by thoughtful Ovimbundu as the chief root-cause of sorcery. The more thoughtful ones also recognize these as an important cause of accusations of sorcery. Expression of anger is traditionally much feared. It is not desired in the character of the king.[3] Nowadays [177] there are more who give free vent to expressions of anger, but they are for the most part either individuals who imitate Europeans and who seek to discard Umbundu cultural habits and values; or they are those who are considered sorcerers, either by themselves or others. An Ocimbundu who as a child has learned traditional adjustments in anger will rarely allow his anger to break through the resistance and become 'extroverted' except in recognized outlets. These outlets are somewhat analogous to our own rationalizations of anger.[4]

154 578 The chief 'introverted' reaction of anger which I have noted

[1] The psychological analysis follows Allport, op. cit., chap. xiv.

[2] See *supra*, p. 101.

[3] See *supra*, p. 21.

[4] Cf. Allport, op. cit., p. 344. The Ovimbundu have not thought up such a high-sounding term as 'moral indignation' as a euphemism for anger.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

[p.141]

# CHAPTER X

# PARTICULAR FIELDS OF EDUCATION

## *Method and Content*

'THE belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other. For some experiences are mis-educative.'[1] In the book quoted, Dewey develops the thesis that educative experience is that which promotes further significant experiences, i.e. growth toward maturity. The alternatives now confronting the school 'if it is not to drift aimlessly', are either a 'return to the intellectual methods and ideals that arose centuries before scientific method was developed', or 'systematic utilization of the scientific method as the pattern and ideal of . . . the potentialities inherent in experience'.[2]

The scientific organization of an experiential curriculum for Umbundu education is an inescapable necessity. In this study it is only possible to touch upon a few of the most urgent problems and point out the basis for organization.

Social behaviour has the central place in Umbundu education, a fact which is said to be true of African education in general, with 'the particular occasion . . . the medium of the lesson'.[3] The undoubtedly greater effectiveness of that traditional training over the accomplishments of formal western schooling in manners, morals, or 'civics' should lead us to investigate the possibility of making use of the traditional method. Social behaviour can only be effectively taught in real-life situations. For the Ocimbundu child the only real world is the world of his own family and village. His manners and morals must first be those of his own family and village. Without that sure foundation, he can never build a larger structure. Sound technique for training in social behaviour can only be attained when the school has a vital connexion with the family, the village, and the living social structure of the people. When the Church and its schools have established their work within that structure, when these schools are entrusted to African

[867]

[1] John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, p. 13.
[2] J. W. C. Dougall, op. cit., *Africa*, 1938, p. 321.
[3] Ibid., p. 108.

862 "The practice of leaving the *ocisemba* in the village by day makes his elder sibling[1] responsible for much of his education....She herself may not be more than six or seven years old and consequently cannot be expected to 'educate' her charge very thoroughly. She interests herself in his walking and talking and he will initate her in many things."[2]
863 General instruction in cleanliness begins at this age, although sphincter control may have begun much earlier, since the mother feels every movement made by the baby on her back.

145 After weaning the physical development of the child proceeds more slowly than that of European peoples, and Childs believes that this may be due to deficiencies in diet.[3]

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

857 From the time a child is able to walk until he is about nine years old he continues seeing the same people as before, but he becomes less dependent upon the elder sister or cousin who helped him, and begins his life-long association with his age-mates. The sex-division of society starts for him at this stage: from about eight years boys begin to eat in the *onjango* with their fathers, girls continuing in the kitchen with their mothers. After about eight years the father becomes largely responsible for the education of boys, the mother for that of girls. During this period the child's education may be summarised under three heads:

869 (a) *Psychological*, chiefly fear of real or imaginary dangers. This is imparted by mother, elder siblings, and perhaps by a grandmother; there is a tendency for the teaching of fear to be done by women.[4]

867 (b) *Social*, chiefly usages of etiquette and acquaintance with the kinship structure and its requirements. A child of about eight is supposed to know his social status and all the etiquette that pertains to it. In the *onjango* the hierarchy of age is observed, honoured guests and old men being served first, and so on all down the line. With the decline of the *onjango*, there has been a great decline in the teaching of etiquette and social usage, and this naturally affects boys rather than girls.

864 Little direct sex teaching is attempted, and adults are reticent in speaking of sexual matters in the presence of children. But since children live with their parents in one-roomed houses, it is inevitable that children should sometimes observe intercourse.

868 (c) *Training in skills*: Children are taught few definite skills before the age of eight or nine, but many of their games are in imitation of adult activities.

604 From the age of six or seven years children are usually sent to spend
857 one or two years with the mother's brother. They may also be sent to the father's sister or brother for a period, and, in the case of girls, to the mother's mother. Formerly prominent families sent their children for a

(1) Either a brother or sister may act as nurse.
(2) Childs, op.cit., p.95. (3) Ibid., p.97.
(4) Childs actually writes " 'the side of the basket' " (p.100), but seems to be referring simply to female relatives.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13



Men are exclusively the makers of 462
musical instruments, and males are the musicians. Men are the [534]
only persons engaged in warfare and administration, and the *onjango* or council house is used exclusively by males. Men follow the [756]
occupation of medicine-man, in which there is considerable specialization. Female practitioners deal with pregnancy and women's ailments. In addition to the tasks for women mentioned above, the following are staple occupations: collecting firewood, drawing water, caring for infants, making pottery, weaving baskets, dancing, and singing. Young girls share these activities with older women.

The foregoing categories explain division on the grounds of sex. 463
Degrees of specialization are not so easy to formulate, but in general a man follows some one occupation, for example wood-carving. Then within this occupation there is specialization in the making of drums, domestic utensils, or figurines.

Almost any woman could make pottery or baskets, but the difference in skill leads naturally to concentration in the hands of expert potters and basket-weavers respectively. These sell their [432]
wares to those who either do not make such articles or are inept at the process.

## STANDARDS OF CONDUCT, MANNERS, AND SALUTATIONS

The parents of a child, also his maternal uncle, assume respon- 861
sibility for training in the precepts and standards given here. The 867
maternal uncle, who is the mother's oldest brother, is particularly interested because he has to pay fines should his sister's children commit thefts. The evidence indicates that the home and restricted family have formative influences over the conduct of children.

Children are beaten if they tell lies, answer old people rudely, or steal food. Ngonga says that his "stealing hand" was once placed in the hot leaves of the cooking pot. If a child steals an egg which is cooking, the hot egg is held between the culprit's hands.

One cannot fail to notice the quiet and unobtrusive way in which children sit in the presence of their elders both in the home and in the council house. Children do not speak when their elders are in [858]
conversation, unless addressed.

A child, likewise an adult, receives a gift with both hands. The [576]
implied idea is that reception with one hand is a depreciation of the gift. If a child holds out one hand, the hand is slapped. When receiving, an Ocimbundu says "*kuku*," literally grandfather [illegible]er. Colloquially the word is used to mean greeting, "I thank you," or "I beg your pardon."

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13



534 Another musical bow named *ekolowa* is of simple construction, consisting of a strip of cane from 54 to 70 cm long and 2 cm wide. At each end of the cane is a projection. A string, when tightly stretched between these projections, pulls the cane into the form of a bow. The performer, placing one end of the bow in his mouth, plucks the string with his thumb and forefinger (Plate XXII, Fig. 7).

Two rubbing instruments are used by the Ovimbundu. *Ogolanda* is a large gourd with a slit in the top along which there is a board cut into sixteen notches. The rubbing of a short stick along these notches produces a sound which is greatly amplified by the gourd resonator. The second instrument of this type is in the form of a wooden bow having its thickest part notched for rubbing with a stick (Plate XXII, Figs. 3, 8).

533 Only specialists are skilled in composing songs, and both men and women are composers. The younger people sometimes go to the old people to learn songs which were popular a generation ago. There are no professional itinerant story-tellers.

There is a chant for funerals which has been quoted in the appropriate section, but no special wedding songs are used. The Ovimbundu have satirical songs humorously describing individual [626] foibles and peculiarities, and as usual in Negro communities a satirical song is feared by thieves, adulterers, or other offenders.

[726] In former days when men were on the warpath they sang, *Okaimbo ketu katito eteke tu lisanumbula tu tandako.* ("Our village is little today, we attack, we extend.") Another war song is *Ocisonde ci likoka ove o kasi vonjila tumdamo.* ("Red ant that creeps along, you who are in the way, get out.")

[484] When men on the march came to a camping ground occupied by another caravan, they sang as a challenge, *Cinene nye? Cinene onjamba kakuli okachama kavela ukuavo.* ("What is the largest? There is no animal largest. The largest is the elephant.")

During hauling and carrying, men sing, *Yende, yende chale, ocimboto lomala vaco.* ("Let it go, let it go, the crab, the frog, with its children.")

482 Lifting loads is always accompanied by noises which suggest that someone is injured. Part of the men make deep grunts to which their companions answer with prolonged groans.

## INITIATION

867 Evidence bearing on initiatory rites in Angola shows that the 881 ceremonies are arranged as a process of incorporation into the

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13



tribes, for everywhere these rites aim at securing ideas of unity, cooperation, conformity to tribal law, and admission to adult tribal life. 867 881

The methods used to achieve these aims are seclusion, circumcision, physical suffering, direct tuition, dancing, hunting, a change of name, and finally a ceremonial return to the tribe with adult status and the right to marry.

The following notes give details of ceremonies witnessed at three centers; namely, Katoko, Ngalangi, and Cangamba. For comparison of these rites with others performed in eastern Angola reference should be made to the books of A. Schachtzabel, and to the papers of H. Baumann (III), and F. and W. Jaspert, whose observations were made independently of each other and of my own investigation. 114 171 881

The dances of the novices at Katoko, where there is a mixed population of Ovimbundu, Vangangella, and Vachokue tribes, are part of the final ceremonies following circumcision and seclusion. The social group formed by this collective circumcision, seclusion, and dancing, is called *ovinganji*, which is the name of the initiatory rites themselves. A boy who has been initiated is not allowed to become friendly with one who has not suffered the ceremony, and all boys who were circumcised at the same time preserve a sense of unity by dancing in a company and moving about together for twelve weeks after their return to the village from which they came. 881

Circumcision, which is prohibited by the Portuguese government, is still practised secretly in some regions. When circumcision is carried out by primitive methods serious infection may result from the lack of clean instruments, for the knife is, of course, unsterilized. 881 304

After the operation the patients are subjected to harsh treatment during the period of cure that follows. The circumcised are secluded in a wooded area. Food provided by the parents is placed on the bank of a river near which the initiation camp is built, and after the parents have gone away the boys bring their rations from the river to the camp. Before eating, the boys are obliged to give profuse thanks to the men who are acting as tutors. In some regions there is no food ration for the boys, and the rule is that each boy must subsist on what he is able to catch and collect with his hands.

Each boy has a male guardian who takes care of him after the operation. Those who have been operated upon are not permitted to wear clothes, nor are they allowed to warm themselves until quite healed. Any infraction of the rules results in a severe whipping.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13



881 short fiber skirts worn within this enclosure by the novices, are in 171 agreement with the observations made at Cangamba. There is 304 also a close resemblance between the independent accounts of [114] H. Baumann and F. and W. Jaspert for the Vachokue, also P. A. Delille and E. de Jonghe for the southwest Congo.

The question of initiation rites, past and present, among people of pure Umbundu culture is important. The matter is more fully dealt with later in discussing cultural contacts and cultural losses, but there are a few points which should not be omitted here.

At Caconda, an Umbundu center of western Angola, Père R. P. Laagel stated that only two years ago he had visited an initiation camp of Ovimbundu boys in the hope of persuading them to return to his mission school at Caconda. My informant stated that the boys were circumcised, beaten, and confined to an enclosure for several weeks. Those who cried out when flogged received a double portion of blows. Poisoning is the fate of a boy who reveals the secrets of the initiation camp to women or uninitiated boys. This is the most direct testimony I have received concerning initiation rites among unmixed Ovimbundu.

881 From Bailundu and Elende I have obtained slight evidence of 292 initiation rites. At the former place, which, like Elende, is a center 171 of the Ovimbundu tribe, fiber costumes were obtained. The mask from Elende is unlike those used at Cangamba, Katoko, and Ngongo. The fiber suits are, however, no different from costumes used at these places. Initiation ceremonies are not held at Elende today, and beyond Dr. Ennis's statement that circumcision rites have been revived in the past fifteen years of his long residence in the neighborhood of Elende, I have no evidence of ritual.

881 The data relating to initiation of boys in Angola suggest loss 177 of the initiatory rites from Umbundu culture, until only a few old masks and costumes, along with attenuated ritual, remain sporadically. On the contrary, in eastern Angola and particularly among the Vachokue, who are farther than the Ovimbundu from coastal influence, initiation ceremonies flourish. At present there is occurring a penetration of initiation rites from the Vachokue area into east-central Angola, which is a region of cultural admixture.

867 The foregoing pages have described certain institutions and social forces which collectively bring individuals into conformity with tribal standards of conduct. The influences at work in this direction may be direct or indirect.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13



Among direct educational forces are the home training given by parents and the mutual responsibility of children and their mother's brother, whose reciprocal obligations have been explained. Family life is undeniably an important institution whose power is by no means suppressed by the strength of the village community and tribal organization. 867

Initiation, which may or may not coincide with puberty, is perhaps the most potent direct influence in formation of character and the inculcation of principles tending to tribal solidarity. Formerly warfare and hunting were more important than they are today, consequently initiation rites imposing hardship and emphasizing the importance of concerted action, had a greater social value than they have at present. 867 881

Formal instruction in industries such as iron-working, or professional hunting, indicates one aspect of occupational training. In these instances there are apprenticeship and an initiatory rite. All children are, however, subject to an indirect industrial education through the agency of play, while a few, according to desire and aptitude, become experts in some particular occupation. 874 [868]

At all times the force of suggestion is at work in the home, in the men's council house, and through everyday observation of the conduct of elders. Probably folklore stories also have an indirect educational value, because some of the fables show the desirability of courage, honesty, and foresight, at the same time deprecating cowardice, stupidity, and low cunning. 869

In chapter IX religious beliefs are discussed, and, in connection with these, standards of conduct are outlined. Although the Ovimbundu have a belief in a supreme being and creator (Suku), and although they believe in survival after death, there is no evidence to show that conduct and education are influenced by theological beliefs. Suku, who is vaguely conceived, is far away and uninterested. He issues no commands. Neither is there a belief in punishments and rewards after death. The standards of conduct are based on utilitarian principles which secure harmony and unity. 771 869 [776]

The efficiency of the direct and indirect educational forces of the Ovimbundu is attested by the history of the tribe. The indigenous system of education, supported by favorable environment, consolidated these people so that they became the dominating power in Angola. Moreover, their cohesion has been such that three centuries of European contacts have failed to eliminate all the basic elements of their tribal life. 177